

Agricultural Wholesale and Retail Trade Jobs Account For Two-Thirds of Farm and Farm-Related Employment

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Farming and its related industries provided 22.9 million jobs, or slightly below 15 percent of total U.S. employment, in 1997 (table 1). About a third of farm and farm-related employment came from farm production and its closely related industries, which include agricultural services, forestry, and fishing; agricultural inputs; and firms that process and market agricultural goods. But industries peripherally related to farming—particularly wholesale and retail trade of agricultural products—accounted for more than two-thirds of farm and farm-related employment.

Over 6.2 million farm and farm-related jobs were in nonmetro counties in 1997 (table 2). These jobs accounted for about 23 percent of all nonmetro employment, a larger share than for the Nation as a whole. Farming and its closely related industries provided over one-half of farm and farm-related employment in nonmetro counties. Wholesale and retail trade industries remained an important source of jobs for nonmetro workers, accounting for approximately 43 percent of nonmetro farm and farm-related employment.

Nonmetro areas of two Northern Plains States relied the most on farm and farm-related industries for jobs. These industries accounted for almost one-third of the total nonmetro employment in Nebraska (31.2 percent) and North Dakota (30.3 percent). Farm production jobs alone provided over one-half of the farm and farm-related employment in North Dakota. In more farm-oriented States, wholesale and retail trade industries generally comprise a relatively small share of employment (about 30 percent in Nebraska and North Dakota) as these industries depend on consumer markets not found in less populated areas.

ERS estimates farm and farm-related employment by combining the Census Bureau's County Business Patterns data with farm employment data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. These estimates are rich in geographic detail that can provide valuable information about the importance of agriculture in various regions of the country. Their timeliness, though, is hindered because over 2 years

occur between data collection, calculation, and release. Farm and farm-related employment includes not only the 3.1 million jobs in farm production but also 4 million jobs in closely related industries (agricultural services, forestry, and fishing; and processing and marketing of agricultural goods), as well as 15.8 million jobs in industries peripherally related to farming (wholesale and retail trade of agricultural products and indirect agribusiness). Farm and farm-related industries are identified as industries having 50 percent or more of their national workforce employed in providing goods and services necessary to satisfy the final demand for agricultural products. An exception to this criterion is indirect agribusiness (such as chemical and fertilizer mining) in which percentages range between 32 and 50 percent. **RA**

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Table 1

Share of total State employment by farm and farm-related industry, 1997

State	Total farm and farm-related industries	Total farm and farm-related industries	Farm production, ag. services, forestry, and fishing	Agricultural inputs	Agricultural processing and marketing	Agricultural wholesale and retail trade	Indirect agribusiness
	<i>Jobs</i>		<i>Percent of total employment</i>				
United States	22,905,453	14.9	2.4	0.3	2.0	9.9	0.4
Alabama	419,342	17.9	2.9	.4	4.4	9.7	.6
Alaska	53,423	14.7	3.2	.1	2.3	9.1	—
Arizona	312,158	12.8	1.2	.2	.6	10.7	.1
Arkansas	293,020	20.7	5.4	.6	5.0	8.9	.8
California	2,517,141	14.3	2.0	.2	2.0	9.9	.3
Colorado	369,270	14.3	2.1	.2	1.3	10.6	.2
Connecticut	223,604	11.0	.8	.1	.7	9.1	.3
Delaware	63,531	13.4	1.3	.2	2.2	9.5	.3
Florida	1,146,475	14.6	1.7	.2	1.0	11.5	.2
Georgia	732,221	16.5	1.9	.3	3.6	10.1	.6
Hawaii	118,002	16.2	1.9	.1	1.3	12.9	—
Idaho	140,112	20.4	6.2	1.0	2.9	9.9	.3
Illinois	955,759	13.6	1.7	.6	1.6	9.2	.5
Indiana	512,272	14.9	2.6	.4	1.4	10.0	.5
Iowa	403,835	22.2	6.9	1.6	3.6	9.5	.5
Kansas	304,565	18.3	5.2	.8	2.6	9.4	.3
Kentucky	417,239	19.3	5.7	.3	2.7	10.1	.5
Louisiana	338,314	14.8	2.4	.4	1.5	10.1	.4
Maine	117,685	16.7	2.6	.1	3.0	10.7	.4
Maryland	350,618	12.2	1.0	.1	1.0	9.9	.2
Massachusetts	477,231	12.3	.5	.1	1.2	10.1	.4
Michigan	683,362	12.9	1.7	.1	.8	10.1	.3
Minnesota	487,167	15.5	3.5	.6	1.9	9.2	.4
Mississippi	259,590	18.5	4.4	.5	3.9	9.3	.5
Missouri	544,962	16.3	4.1	.5	2.1	9.3	.4
Montana	98,099	19.5	6.7	.6	.8	11.3	.3
Nebraska	240,489	21.8	6.6	1.7	4.0	9.4	.2
Nevada	108,797	10.5	.7	.1	.4	9.2	.1
New Hampshire	97,242	13.7	1.1	.1	1.2	10.9	.4
New Jersey	538,909	11.8	.6	.1	1.5	9.3	.4
New Mexico	129,859	14.4	2.7	.2	.8	10.4	.3
New York	1,178,600	12.0	.9	.1	1.5	9.3	.3
North Carolina	846,375	18.5	2.3	.3	5.7	9.6	.6
North Dakota	98,899	23.5	9.5	1.8	2.3	9.9	—
Ohio	891,486	13.7	1.8	.2	1.1	10.1	.5
Oklahoma	327,939	17.5	5.6	.3	1.5	9.9	.2
Oregon	337,929	17.3	4.8	.3	1.4	10.4	.3
Pennsylvania	951,566	14.3	1.5	.2	2.2	10.0	.4
Rhode Island	70,743	13.0	.5	.1	1.7	10.3	.5
South Carolina	386,551	18.1	1.9	.2	4.6	10.6	.8
South Dakota	104,436	22.3	8.5	1.1	2.8	9.7	.2
Tennessee	559,616	17.2	3.6	.3	2.9	9.9	.5
Texas	1,616,209	14.6	2.9	.2	1.5	9.7	.3
Utah	160,770	13.0	1.8	.2	1.3	9.5	.3
Vermont	60,212	16.5	3.2	.2	1.6	11.3	.2
Virginia	570,877	14.2	1.9	.2	2.4	9.3	.4
Washington	517,962	16.0	3.5	.3	1.6	10.3	.4
West Virginia	124,632	14.8	3.0	.2	1.1	10.3	.2
Wisconsin	555,023	17.4	3.6	.6	2.4	9.9	.8
Wyoming	49,805	16.6	4.4	.5	.5	10.2	1.1

— = Less than 0.1 percent

Source: Calculated by ERS using Department of Commerce data.

Table 2

Share of total nonmetro employment by farm and farm-related industry, 1997

State	Total farm and farm-related industries	Total farm and farm-related industries	Farm production, ag. services, forestry, and fishing	Agricultural inputs	Agricultural processing and marketing	Agricultural wholesale and retail trade	Indirect agribusiness
	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Percent of total employment</i>					
United States	6,225,848	22.9	7.8	0.8	3.9	9.9	0.5
Alabama	176,874	27.5	6.2	.8	10.6	8.9	1.0
Alaska	35,475	18.7	5.4	.2	4.0	9.1	—
Arizona	45,891	16.6	2.3	.2	.3	13.7	.1
Arkansas	170,935	25.4	8.8	.9	6.5	8.7	.6
California	99,434	21.5	7.9	.6	1.4	11.5	.2
Colorado	103,352	22.3	7.1	.5	1.7	12.8	.1
Connecticut	19,990	15.2	2.0	.1	2.4	9.9	.8
Delaware	19,251	28.4	4.4	.7	9.3	13.8	.1
Florida	94,970	22.9	7.8	.6	1.7	12.6	.4
Georgia	278,704	23.8	5.2	.7	7.8	9.2	.9
Hawaii	40,416	22.2	5.6	.1	2.0	14.5	—
Idaho	105,160	23.9	8.4	1.3	3.4	10.4	.4
Illinois	207,660	22.1	8.0	1.6	2.4	9.5	.5
Indiana	168,876	19.3	6.1	.8	2.4	9.3	.8
Iowa	257,936	27.6	11.6	2.1	4.4	8.9	.6
Kansas	182,088	26.2	10.6	1.5	4.6	9.2	.4
Kentucky	228,381	24.4	10.0	.5	3.9	9.6	.5
Louisiana	90,307	21.0	7.7	.9	2.8	8.8	.8
Maine	67,593	17.9	3.9	.1	2.9	10.6	.4
Maryland	39,988	19.7	4.2	.3	3.3	11.6	.3
Massachusetts	7,627	14.8	2.3	.1	1.0	10.8	.6
Michigan	139,729	17.9	5.0	.4	1.0	11.1	.4
Minnesota	213,324	25.7	9.8	1.6	4.1	9.8	.5
Mississippi	192,186	21.4	6.1	.6	5.2	8.8	.7
Missouri	230,590	25.3	11.4	.9	3.9	8.9	.3
Montana	77,783	20.6	8.1	.6	.7	11.0	.3
Nebraska	151,762	31.2	13.6	2.8	5.3	9.4	.1
Nevada	16,946	12.3	3.3	.3	.3	8.3	.2
New Hampshire	38,890	14.3	1.6	.1	1.2	11.0	.4
New Jersey	N.A.						
New Mexico	61,150	18.8	5.6	.3	.9	11.4	.7
New York	112,638	16.7	4.2	.3	1.4	10.4	.4
North Carolina	315,311	25.5	4.8	.4	9.7	9.7	.8
North Dakota	65,556	30.3	16.1	2.2	2.8	9.2	—
Ohio	205,939	19.4	5.6	.7	2.2	9.8	1.1
Oklahoma	165,180	25.6	12.5	.6	2.7	9.5	.3
Oregon	118,984	23.3	9.6	.6	1.8	11.0	.4
Pennsylvania	160,815	18.8	4.3	.3	3.2	10.5	.6
Rhode Island	6,415	14.1	1.1	—	.3	12.7	—
South Carolina	127,865	24.4	3.9	.4	9.1	10.1	.9
South Dakota	75,602	26.3	12.6	1.5	2.8	9.3	.1
Tennessee	209,097	24.1	8.7	.5	5.5	8.6	.7
Texas	387,967	27.2	14.2	.9	3.1	8.8	.3
Utah	47,601	19.4	6.1	.4	1.9	10.7	.4
Vermont	40,955	17.2	3.8	.2	1.3	11.7	.1
Virginia	170,861	23.5	6.0	.5	7.1	9.2	.8
Washington	121,530	25.8	10.7	.8	2.4	11.1	.9
West Virginia	68,323	15.7	4.5	.2	1.3	9.5	.1
Wisconsin	223,314	24.4	8.4	1.3	3.4	10.5	.8
Wyoming	38,627	18.6	5.6	.5	.7	10.3	1.6

— = Less than 0.1 percent

N.A. = Not applicable. New Jersey has no nonmetro counties.

Source: Calculated by ERS using Department of Commerce data.